United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y  H I G H L I G H T S

- Security Council votes unanimously to recommend Boutros Boutros Ghali of Egypt as new United Nations Secretary-General. Assembly President welcomes recommendation saying it is "deserved and timely".

- Germany requests urgent meeting of Security Council on situation in Yugoslavia.

- Secretary-General holds talks with Italian Foreign Minister on situation in Yugoslavia, and in Cyprus, as well as on recent developments concerning El Salvador.

- Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, continues talks with Yugoslav parties.

- Secretary-General expresses hope that momentum generated by Madrid peace talks on Middle East will be sustained and that lasting peace will become a reality.

- International Committee of the Red Cross announces arrival of its first relief ship in Dubrovnik; second ICRC freighter carrying more than 265 tonnes of relief supplies due to arrive tomorrow.

- Under-Secretary-General refutes charges of alleged misuse of funds of United Nations Humanitarian Relief Operation in Afghanistan.

- Social Committee hears urgent appeal by Haiti to international community to end "unprecedented" human rights violations in that country.

- French Prime Minister calls for mobilization of all efforts to combat crime at United Nations ministerial meeting in Versailles.

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The Security Council decided last night to recommend Boutros Boutros Ghali of Egypt to succeed Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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During its closed private meeting, the Council adopted unanimously a resolution which read: "The Security Council, having considered the question of the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, recommends to the General Assembly that Boutros Boutros Ghali be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1996."

The 69-year old Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister would be the first Arab and the first African to hold the post of Secretary-General. The 166-member General Assembly will have to endorse the Council's recommendation at a date not yet set.

This morning, the President of the Council, Aurel Dragos Munteanu of Romania, called on the Assembly President and officially conveyed the Council's unanimous decision.

Also in a statement today, Assembly President Samir S. Shihabi of Saudi Arabia expressed his great pleasure and satisfaction in receiving the recommendation. He said the choice, which he called "well deserved and timely", was "a tribute to the role of Africa, the Arab world, and Egypt in the United Nations and in the international arena". He would give Mr. Ghali his full support, he said.

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Germany has requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council regarding the situation in Yugoslavia. The request was transmitted yesterday in a letter signed by the Permanent representative of Germany to the United Nations, Detlev Grav Zu Rantzau.

British Ambassador Sir David Hannay said last week that the European Community members of the Council were preparing a draft resolution on the situation in Yugoslavia. He made the comment to the press following a briefing by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, who had just returned from his second mission to Yugoslavia.

Sir David Hannay said the draft text included efforts to seek a lasting cease-fire; to reinforce the humanitarian efforts; to strengthen the arms embargo, including the imposition of an oil embargo; and to explore international involvement in keeping the peace in Yugoslavia.

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On the first day of his official visit to Italy, the Secretary-General held talks today in Rome with Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis with whom he discussed the situation in Yugoslavia, and in Cyprus, as well as the recent developments concerning El Salvador.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will have a private audience at the Vatican with his Holiness Pope John Paul II.

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Earlier today, the Secretary-General congratulated over the telephone Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, whose appointment as his successor was recommended last night to the General Assembly by the Security Council, and expressed to Mr. Boutros Ghali his full support and cooperation in the future. During their conversation, the Secretary-General and Mr. Ghali discussed plans for the transition period and the possible schedule for the necessary briefings they will go through pending the Assembly's decision.

The Secretary-General will leave Italy for Madrid on Sunday, 24 November, for a three-day official visit to Spain before travelling to Paris on Wednesday, 27 November.

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Continuing his talks with Yugoslav parties, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Mr. Cyrus Vance, was scheduled to meet today with Mr. Babic, Leader of the Serb Communities in Knin Krajina.

Mr. Vance is in Yugoslavia on a third mission, accompanied by Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding and a United Nations team, in an effort to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in that country.

Yesterday, Mr. Vance and his team met with President Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Hercegovina in Sarajevo, and with Mr. Hadjic, Leader of the Serbian community in eastern Slavonia.

Mr. Vance's mission will continue over the weekend.

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The Secretary-General has stated that given his enduring commitment to peace in Middle East he wants to pay tribute to the historic peace conference in Madrid which opened on 30 October. He made the statement in a report to the Security Council, dated 15 November, on the situation in the Middle East

The Secretary-General further expresses hope that the momentum that has been generated by the Madrid peace talks will be sustained and that "the lasting peace that has been denied the peoples of that region will become a reality".

According to the report, there are currently three United Nations peace-keeping forces in the region: The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOP) deployed between the Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Hights; the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mandated to confirm the withdrawal of the Israeli forces as called for by the Security Council; and finally the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) which operates in Beirut and in Egypt.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has announced the arrival of its first relief ship, "the Rhodos II", on 21 November in Dubrovnik. A second ICRC freighter, the "Dimaratos", carrying more than 265 tonnes of relief supplies on board is due to arrive in the Yugoslav port city tomorrow, 23 November.

According to the ICRC, delegates have already begun to attend to the needs of the wounded and sick in hospitals there. Due to an acute water shortage, ICRC delegates are also engaged in organizing the distribution of drinking water supplies for hospital and city needs.

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Under-Secretary-General J. Richard Foran today refuted press report of alleged misuse of funds of the United Nations Humanitarian Relief Operation in Afghanistan (UNOCA) -- also known as "Operation Salaam".

In a statement through the Secretary-General's Spokeswoman, Mr. Foran said that while it was clear that there were some significant lapses in adherence to established administrative and accounting procedures, no evidence had been found of personal wrongdoing by any staff member of UNOCA. Virtually all the funds, alleged in some press reports to be "missing", had been accounted for, he said. He would present a full report on the operation to the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions within the next ten days.

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An urgent appeal was made yesterday to the General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) to end the "unprecedented" violations of human rights in Haiti.

The Permanent Representative of Haiti, Fritz Longchamp, made his appeal as the Committee continued its consideration of human rights questions and situations. He said the 30 September coup d'état in Haiti had resulted in human rights violations unprecedented even by the standards of the Duvalier era. He presented a list of human rights violations which, he said, had taken place in Haiti since the coup, including the killing of hundreds of people by the military.

The Haitian representative said the situation was alarming and nothing was being done to prevent the massacre of the civilian population. The "ferocious repression" had had disastrous consequences beyond Haiti's borders, with thousands of people trying to escape through the Caribbean sea. He recalled that over a year ago, the United Nations was supervising the holding of the first democratic elections in Haiti. But, he added, the same situation of insecurity and violations of human rights which had prompted such supervision still remained. Ambassador Longchamps appealed to the international community to live up to its duty to condemn and put an end to those abuses.

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